

DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES



- Remain calm (if you escalate, they will escalate)
- Remove the audience: Try as best you can to find a private space to speak, or if that is not possible, have the rest of the class leave. Having an audience can often keep an escalated situation going.
- Actively listen (most people get upset and shout/get louder because they are not feeling heard) Active listening means listening, acknowledging, showing empathy, being non-judgmental, validating, reflecting back what you hear)
- “Kill ‘em with kindness” (it can be difficult to stay angry in the face of kindness, and often times kindness can de-escalate a situation more quickly than if you also become angry. Your upset will just validate their upset and likely lengthen out the issue)

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- Respect personal space: Avoid getting into their personal space or touching them, even if your goal is to reassure. Allow them some breathing room (this can be beneficial to you as well)



- Deflect responsibility to LTC as an organization if need be, and, if possible, offer an alternative (this can be great for face mask conflicts especially...ex: “I get it, masks can be a nuisance. Since LTC requires anyone on campus to keep their masks on in public spaces, would you be more comfortable attending the lecture online from home or in a library study room on campus so you can shut the door and take your mask off?”
- Always put your and other students’ health and safety first. If a situation is escalating and you are concerned about violence, you can call campus security and/or 911 (or have a student do it.

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- Comfortable “L stance”: Be mindful of how you position yourself with the student. If they seem confrontational don’t face them head on. Keeping a stance that is still frontward facing, but with one of your legs creating an “L” shape, allows you to stand firm, but also creates less confrontation. It also allows you to be ready if someone should resort to violence





- Ignore challenging questions: Don't take the bait. Misery loves company and someone looking for a fight or argument will try their best to get you to engage.
- Be mindful of *how* you say things: Tone, volume and cadence matter
- Set limits in a positive, non-threatening manner. For instance, if someone is yelling, telling them "If you don't stop yelling you'll have to leave" is likely to further their upset. A more positive approach would be to say "When you stop yelling, we can find a solution to what's bothering you."
- Use "I" statements, not "You" statements. Take ownership for your own thoughts, emotions and experiences. Starting sentences with "You" can feel accusatory and attacking.
- Ask questions before responding. If someone writes via email or on a discussion board something that seems inflammatory or rude, instead of reacting, perhaps ask them to tell you more about what they mean. Often people don't want to explain rudeness, they just want a reaction. Asking for more information may de-escalate on its own.
- Use the phrase "Let me see if I am understanding you correctly" (after you've engaged in active listening). This tells the upset person you do want to understand and are actively pursuing hearing them.



- For anything online: Set expectations clearly up front. Perhaps engage the class and get their input on what seems reasonable for posting, etc. (anytime you can get buy in, people are less likely to break their own rules). If someone does instigate conflict online in a written format, write a general response reminding people of rules without singling anyone out. If that does not work, you may need to have a private conversation via phone, text or email with that student.